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## Daily Environment Report

July 13, 2017 - Number 133

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### Leading the News

#### *Budget*

##### **Appropriations Bill Advances With Cuts for EPA, Interior**

A spending bill with cuts for environmental and public lands agencies was approved July 12 by a House subcommittee, over Democratic objections that the cuts were too big.

#### *Water Resources*

##### **Drought Bill Passes House, Draws Ire of Top California Democrats**

The Republican-led House July 12 passed a bill that would streamline water project permitting and take other actions to alleviate drought in California, but the state's top Democrats see it as a threat to state sovereignty and are vowing to kill it in the Senate.

### News

#### *Air Pollution*

##### **Ozone Standards Delay Illegal, Advocates Argue in Lawsuit**

Postponing decisions under the EPA's new ozone pollution limits for a year is illegal, a dozen environmental and public health groups said in a lawsuit.

#### *Air Pollution*

## **Senate Panel Votes to Reauthorize Diesel Grant Program**

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee approved bipartisan legislation to reauthorize a popular federal clean air program that targets emissions from older diesel engines.

## ***Biotechnology***

### **App Links Chinese Farmers With Pesticide-Dropping Drones**

Chinese farmers can now order drone-sprayed pesticides and fertilizers via a smartphone app.

## ***Biotechnology***

### **Genetically Modified Soybean to Get EU Okay Despite Split Vote**

A genetically modified soybean will soon be allowed to be imported into the European Union, despite an inconclusive vote of the bloc's member countries July 12 and a negative European Parliament opinion, the European Commission told Bloomberg BNA.

## ***Brownfields***

### **Senate Brownfields Bill With Added Liability Relief Advances**

New bipartisan brownfields legislation in the Senate could let some entities off the hook for contaminated site cleanup, while allowing more parties to become prospective site purchasers.

## ***Budget***

### **Energy Innovation Agency Told to Work on Despite Budget Cuts**

The Energy Department's program to invest in innovative energy technologies should keep working even though it's in line for elimination, a House appropriator said.

## ***Chemical Security***

### **Chemical Safety Board Avoids Funding Cut in House—For Now**

House lawmakers' decision to leave the U.S. Chemical Safety Board's funding flat in fiscal 2018 is a small reprieve after the White House proposed eliminating the agency earlier this year.

## ***Chemicals***

### **EPA to Release New Chemical Control Rules Within Month: Official**

The EPA will release new chemical control rules within the next month, clearing part of the logjam of company requests to register new chemicals, an agency official told Bloomberg BNA July 12.

## ***Climate Policy***

### **Australian States Seek Zero Carbon Emissions Absent Federal Plan**

Another Australian state has committed to net-zero greenhouse emissions by 2050, meaning most of the country's economy now operates under that goal despite the absence of a federal policy.

## ***Climate Policy***

### **EU, the Number 20 in G-20, Finds Its Voice as U.S. Waffles**

At global summits, national leaders like Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping, or Angela Merkel typically get the bulk of the attention. During last week's Group of 20 meeting in Hamburg, a more faceless entity—the European Union—took the lead, especially on trade and climate change.

## ***EPA***

### **Senate Environment Panel Approves EPA Enforcement Nominee**

A Senate committee narrowly approved the nomination of Susan Parker Bodine to serve as EPA's assistant administrator for the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance.

## ***Endangered Species***

### **Interior Picks Hint at Lesser Focus on Endangered Species**

President Donald Trump's picks to fill open spots at the Interior Department may indicate endangered species protections will be less of a priority, according to environmental advocates.

## ***Energy***

### **Bill to Boost Carbon Capture Tax Credit Resurfaces in Senate**

The recent collapse of high-profile carbon capture project at Mississippi's Kemper plant isn't deterring Senate lawmakers from pushing forward with a new policy to provide an incentive for that technology.

#### *Energy*

##### **Nuclear Regulatory Commission Nominees Clear Senate Panel**

Two nominees for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission cleared the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee June 29.

#### *Energy*

##### **Trump Picks Banker, Executive as Energy Undersecretaries**

President Donald Trump's pick to be the Energy Department's third-ranking official is an energy attorney and executive at an energy company in which billionaire Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Inc. has a controlling stake.

#### *Food*

##### **General Mills Dodges Label Suit Over Pesticide Residue**

General Mills, Inc. July 12 dodged would-be class suits alleging it deceptively labels Nature Valley granola products as "natural" when they contain trace amounts of the weedkiller chemical glyphosate (In re General Mills Glyphosate Litig., D. Minn., No. 16-2869, 7/12/17).

#### *Fuel Efficiency*

##### **Australia Drive for Stricter Fuel Efficiency Angers Automakers**

The Australian government is considering a fuel efficiency standard for new light vehicles that has angered the association representing companies including Toyota, Volkswagen and Ford, but pleased climate advocacy groups.

#### *Hazardous Waste*

##### **Tennessee Hazardous Waste Handler Admits to Testing Fraud**

An Oak Ridge, Tenn.-based manufacturing company admitted July 11 to fraudulent hazardous material certifications for devices it shipped and agreed to pay \$500,000 in remediation and fines.

#### *NAFTA*

##### **Texas Lawmaker Sees NAFTA Labor Provisions Attracting Votes**

A vote on a modernized North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) will attract more Democrats than past trade deals since NAFTA 2.0 will contain upgrades to labor and environmental provisions, Rep. Will Hurd (R-Texas) said. "There's going to be a labor section in NAFTA," Hurd said, adding that pro-trade Democrats who view labor and environment as critical pieces in trade deals will "probably be happy with it." The pre-election rhetoric on NAFTA was in line with ...

#### *Natural Resources*

##### **Utah's National Monument Stance Sends Trade Show to Colorado**

Utah's perceived hostile stance against federal public lands designation spurred The North Face, Patagonia, REI and other outdoors recreation companies to urge a retailer association to move three major trade shows from Salt Lake City to Denver, an officer for The North Face told Bloomberg BNA.

#### *Oil & Gas*

##### **Billion-Barrel Mexican Find Could Spur Rush on Next Oil Auctions**

A billion-barrel crude discovery in Mexico could be just the lure the country badly needs to boost investment from oil majors as it lacks the wherewithal to reverse years of sagging output.

#### *Pipeline Safety*

##### **Transportation Agency to Audit Pipeline Safety Research**

The Department of Transportation is reviewing its communications on pipeline safety and use of outside research through an audit, it announced July 12.

#### *Regulatory Policy*

### **House Panel Moves to Repress 'Back-Room' Rulemaking**

"Sue and settle" rulemaking by federal agencies, carried out without public input or knowledge, would be abolished under a bill approved by a House panel July 12.

### **Renewable Energy**

#### **Solar Power Gets \$46 Million Boost From Energy Department**

The Energy Department awarded \$46.2 million in research grants to improve solar energy technologies and reduce costs to 3 cents per kilowatt-hour by 2030.

### **Shareholder Activism**

#### **NRG to Shed Up to \$4 Billion of Assets on Elliott Pressure**

NRG Energy Inc., the U.S. power generator facing pressure from billionaire investor Paul Singer, rose the most in almost nine years after announcing plans to shed as much as \$4 billion of assets.

### **Toxic Torts**

#### **Correction**

A story that ran in Daily Environment Report July 12 on a proposed class settlement involving a 2014 chemical spill into West Virginia's Elk River incorrectly said the settlement had been approved. The story has been corrected and reflects concerns the court said would have to be addressed prior to approval.

### **Vehicle Fuels**

#### **Markup on Ethanol Boost Could Come Before August Recess**

A committee vote on legislation to boost ethanol sales could take place before the August recess, a spokeswoman for Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), the chief ethanol proponent in the Senate, told Bloomberg BNA.

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